

Bishop Wordsworth's School Politics Department



A2 POLITICS US GOVERNMENT & POLITICS 2016-17

A2 Unit F853: Contemporary US Government and Politics

Candidates should build on their working knowledge of the concepts and ideologies introduced at AS and also be aware of key and current developments. The study of US government and politics in practice should be taught against a background of the ways in which government and politics works in theory.

In this unit, candidates are expected to develop knowledge and understanding of the contemporary government and politics of the United States of America. They should develop knowledge and understanding of the constitutional arrangements and principles, the legislature, the executive and judiciary of the federal government, as well as issues concerning representation and participation. Candidates should be aware of all major political developments in the United States over the previous decade.

Elections, presidential and congressional

Political parties

Pressure groups

The constitution

Congress

The presidency

The Supreme Court

Civil rights and liberties

This is a 2 hour paper.

The paper includes one mandatory question which can be on any topic (divided into part (a) out of 10 marks and part (b) out of 15 marks.

There is then a choice of seven essay questions, worth 25 marks each, of which you have to answer any three.

3.5 A2 Unit F855: US Government and Politics

In this **Synoptic unit** candidates are expected to draw together the knowledge, understanding and skills learned in different parts of the Advanced GCE course, and make appropriate connections between the areas studied. For this unit, candidates should be able to **compare and contrast features of British and American politics** and, where relevant, make connections to and comparisons with the political system of the European Union. It is essential that candidates can view political institutions and practices in perspective.

It is expected that candidates will supplement their formal study of politics and government by being alert to the course of events in the world of politics and following them in the available media.

In the assessment of this unit, candidates are encouraged to make appropriate references to political systems, processes and events beyond the UK, US and European Union, and insofar as these are relevant and illuminating, they will be rewarded.

Elections

Political parties and pressure groups

Civil rights and liberties

Constitutions

Legislatures

Executives

Judiciaries

This is a 2 hour paper.

There is then a choice of seven essay questions, worth 50 marks each, of which you have to answer any two.

ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

Students are still expected to follow the news, usually by reading a serious newspaper most days of the week (= Times, Telegraph, Guardian or Independent); these are all available online and both schools have subscriber access. You should also watch or listen to a reputable news programme regularly, e.g. Newsnight, Channel 4 News, Radio 4's Today, PM, etc. Websites such as BBC News are highly recommended – bookmark as favourites on your phone. **Remember that the second A2 paper requires you to compare the UK and US political systems, so you need to keep up with British politics as well as American affairs.**

The Department also maintains a regularly updated webpage on the BWS website - <http://www.bws-school.org.uk/Curriculum-Exams/Politics/resources/>

where links to other useful news sources can be found, and articles and documents of particular relevance to our topics are frequently posted. Please bookmark this and check it at least weekly, as well using resources on it when asked. Many websites such as *The Huffington Post* and the *The New York Times* have email update services or RSS feeds, which are well worth signing up to. **There will be periodic current affairs tests!**

Students should also read *The Economist*, which has an excellent US section as well as valuable British coverage. It offers discounted student subscriptions, but each week's edition can also be read free online. Its *Democracy in America* blog is also excellent.

The Politics Department subscribes to *Politics Review*, a journal written for A level students. The journal is published four times a year and students are encouraged to read it, either in the Politics Office or online. You will also be set articles to read and note from the online archive, which can be accessed from the web link below:

<http://magazinesonline.philipallan.co.uk/>

Username: pa@bws.wilts.sch.uk Password: password

From the home page, click on the *Magazine Archive* button, scroll down to find and click on the *Politics Review* box.

To find the issue of *Politics Review* you need use the drop down menus to select the Volume and Issue required – Volume Number covers four issues in an academic Year: 1990-91 = Volume 1; 2014-15 = Volume 24

Then choose the issue you want from within the Year: September, November, February or April.

The screenshot shows a web interface for the 'Politics Review Magazine Archive'. A central modal window is active, featuring the title 'Politics Review Magazine Archive' and two dropdown menus labeled 'Select a volume' and 'Select an issue'. Below these are 'Cancel' and 'OK' buttons. The background is a blurred view of the website's main page, which includes a large graphic of the American flag and the text 'Magazine Archive' and 'Politics Review'. At the bottom of the background page, there are buttons for 'Take out a free trial' and 'Subscribe', and a note that 'Subscription expires 08/12/2016'.

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Unit F853: The US Constitution

(AJE)

Duration: 5 weeks

Content:

The making of the constitution; the importance and evolution of its underlying principles; separation of powers and checks and balances, the rule of law and constitutional rights. Constitutional amendments; the process of amendment and the need for reform; federalism.

Class Activities

Initial survey on knowledge of US affairs

Class use of Constitution Center interactive resources (timeline, interactive constitution)

Class discussion & notes on constitution text incl amendments

Class essay planning on separation of powers

Class planning on merits of federalism Q – framework provided, needs supporting material

Source-based 1a and 1b Q on constitutional amendments

Assignments

Reading

Notemaking – incl timeline of constitutional formation; Amendments and Rights; Separation of Powers; Federalism

Online Research and presentations on US states

Essay

Essential references

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013), Chapter 1
Text of US Constitution and Amendments to the Constitution

The US Constitution: Does it ensure limited government? Robert Singh Politics Review, February 2014

Does the US Constitution Work? Kay Moxon and Tom Murphy, Politics Review, February 2012

Divided Government: Strength or Weakness of US politics? Anthony Bennett, Politics Review November 2011

Proposed Amendments to the US Constitution, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review April 2005

Does the US Constitution Work? Anthony Bennett, Politics Review April 2009

The US Constitution: A Reappraisal, Anthony Bennett, Politics Review September 2004

Federalism under George W Bush, Robert Fletcher, Politics Review April 2010

Additional references

A More Perfect Constitution: Why the Constitution Must Be Revised: Ideas to Inspire a New Generation, Larry J. Sabato; Walker and Company (2008)

The Words We Live by: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution, Linda R. Monk; Hyperion Books (2004)

American Federalism Revisited, Russell Tillson, Talking Politics April 2003, p168-174

Elected Mayors in the USA, Jonathan Parker Talking Politics April 2003, p175-8

http://www.constitutioncenter.org/ncc_edu_Perspectives_on_the_Constitution.aspx - 3 articles, all worth looking at, esp for historians wanting to make links

Websites:

www.constitutioncenter.org

www.usconstitution.net/constam.html

The Economist – www.economist.com

Washington Post – www.washingtonpost.com

New York Times – www.nytimes.com

www.realclearpolitics.com

www.politics1.com

A2 Essay question:

Has the US been successful in avoiding concentrating too much power with federal government in Washington? [25] *Sample Paper*

Examine the reasons for the changes in the balance of power between federal and state governments since 1980. [25] *June 2010*

Discuss the claim that the Constitution has evolved greatly since 1787. [25] *January 2011*

Use the source and your own knowledge:
a) Outline three types of federalism. [10]
b) Account for the changes in federal-state relations since 1992. [15] *June 2011*

Discuss the view that the US Constitution is in need of major reform. [25] *January 2012*

Assess the claim that states are increasingly reliant on the federal government. *June 2012*

Examine the reasons why most proposed amendments to the American Constitution have failed to be passed. [25] *January 2013*

Assess the claim that that the US Constitution is flexible. [25] *June 2013*

To what extent has federalism changed over time? *June 2014*

Assess the claim that the US Constitution is an obstacle to effective government. *June 2015*

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Synoptic Unit F855: Constitutions

AJE

Duration: 2 weeks

Content:

The sources, nature and role of constitutions; parliamentary and separated; relationships between the centre and periphery; federal, devolved and unitary constitutions; constitutional reform; contemporary issues associated with constitutions and their reform.

Class Activities

Teacher presentation on nature of Parliamentary vs Separated systems

Discussion

Essay planning in class

Assignments

Revisiting AS Constitutions notes

Studying Synoptic Constitutions booklet

Reading articles

Research and Essay: Codified/Uncodified constitutions

Essential references

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013), Chapter 1

AS notes on the UK Constitution

Synoptic Constitutions booklet

Political Insight article into where power lies in the EU -

<http://www.psa.ac.uk/journals/pdf/6/j.2041-9066.2011.00052.x.pdf>

Additional references

The New British Constitution, Vernon Bogdanor; Hart Publishing (2009) – copy in Politics office

The Coalition and the Constitution, Vernon Bogdanor; Hart Publishing (2011) – copy in Politics office

Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction, Rod Hague and Martin Harrop; Palgrave (8th Edition 2010) – Chapters 13 & 14 - copy in Politics Office

Focus on Parliamentary and Presidential government, Nick Gallop, Politics Review, November 2013

Has Lisbon changed anything in the EU? David Phinnemore, Politics Review February 2011

Sovereignty and Devolution: quasi-federalism? Vernon Bogdanor, Politics Review February 2010

Constitutional Interpretation - http://www.usconstitution.net/consttop_intr.html

Good article on the influence of the US Const on the world and how later constits compare - <http://constitutioncenter.org/learn/educational-resources/historical-documents/perspectives-on-the-constitution-constitutions-around-the-world>

Article looking at comparing separation/ fusion of powers in a number of countries - http://www.usconstitution.net/consttop_sepp.html

Article on the declining influence of the US Constitution worldwide - <http://journalistsresource.org/studies/international/development/decline-influence-united-states-constitution>

Economist on Lisbon Treaty -

http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?story_id=14585996

Where does power lie in the European Union, Richard Whitaker and Philip Lynch, Politics Review April 2009

A2 Essay question:

'Devolved power has all the advantages of unitary systems but none of the disadvantages of federalism'. Discuss. [50] *Sample Paper*

Discuss the view that devolved power has all the advantages of a unitary system but none of the disadvantages of federalism. [50] *January 2010*

"The success of a constitution is dependent upon its ability to evolve". Discuss. [50] *June 2010*

Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of written constitutions. [50] *January 2011*

To what extent have recent reforms brought the UK closer to the US in constitutional terms? [50] *June 2011*

"The experience of the USA clearly illustrates why the UK is in need of a written constitution." Discuss. [50] *January 2012*

Discuss the view that the power of executives is determined by constitutional arrangements. [50] *June 2012*

Assess the claim that devolution and federalism create unnecessary levels of government. [50] *June 2012*

'The experience of other countries suggests that the UK now needs a written constitution' Discuss [50] *January 2013*

Unwritten constitutions place too much power in the hands of the legislature.' Discuss [50] *June 2013*

Assess the claim that the problems of amending a written constitution mean that an uncodified constitution is the better option. *June 2014*

Evaluate the factors which make a federal system of government suitable for a country. *June 2015*

“A parliamentary system is more likely than a presidential system to lead to an elective dictatorship.”
Discuss.

June 2016

Past Paper Questions (old A2 syllabus):

Discuss the extent to which constitutions limit the powers of legislatures. [60]

January 2005

Examine the view that, in practice, the most important features of constitutions are to be found in statutes, conventions and judicial precedent. [60]

June 2005

Examine the view that federal and devolved systems of government enhance democracy. [60]

June 2005

Discuss the benefits of a shift in power away from the centre in modern political systems. [60]

June 2006

Discuss the effectiveness of constitutional checks and balances in different political systems. [60]

June 2007

Assess the merits of an unwritten constitution. [60]

June 2008

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Unit F853: The presidency PA

Duration: 5 weeks

Content:

Functions of executives; powers of the President;
presidential policy-making (both domestic and foreign);
cabinet; Executive Office of the President; problems of the coordination of the Executive Branch;
relations with Congress;
theories and practice of presidential power.

Essential reference

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013)

Is Obama too cautious a president? Politics Review Volume 24 November 2014

US Update: The War Powers Act revisited, Politics Review Volume 24 February 2015

The modern president: transformational leader or facilitator? Politics Review Volume 23, April 2014

US Update presidential appointments, Politics Review Volume 23, April 2014

The cabinet in US politics, Politics Review Volume 21, April 2012

US Update Obama's handling of the debt ceiling crisis, Politics Review Volume 21, Nov 2011

US Update 'presidential power in the context of Libya and the War Powers Act', Politics Review Volume 21, Sept 2011

Divided government strength or weakness of US politics Politics Review Volume 21, Nov 2011

2010 Mid term elections: What does Obama do now? Politics Review Volume 20, April 2011

A2 Focus on... EXOP, Politics Review Volume 20, April 2011

The Arizona shootings, Politics Review Volume 20, April 2011

US update Grid lock or compromise? Politics Review Volume 20, April 2011

A2 Focus on ...The president as commander in chief, Politics Review Volume 20, February 2011

US update...Mid terms in context, Politics Review Volume 20, February 2011

The Biden vice presidency, Politics Review Volume 19, April 2010

Focus on the US Cabinet, Politics Review Volume 19, November 2009

Saying no to the president, Politics Review Volume 19, September 2009

Additional references

- Executive Orders*, Politics Review Vol 22, November 2012
- Congress: An obstacle to effective government?* Politics Review Vol 22, November 2012
- Update: Presidential Transitions*, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review April 2009
- The 2008 Presidential Election: All Change?* Robert Singh, Politics Review February 2009
- Update: Presidents' final two years in office*, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review November 2008
- The Presidential Veto*, Anthony Bennett, Politics Review November 2008
- Update: President Bush's second veto*, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review September 2007
- The Rise and Fall of the Bush Presidency*, Mike Simpson, Talking Politics April 2006, p94-96
- Revisiting US Presidential Power*, John Dumbrell, Politics Review April 2006
- The Executive Office of the President*, Russell Tillson, Talking Politics September 2006, p40-43
- The US Vice-Presidency... A Heartbeat away*, Russell Tillson, Talking Politics April 2004, p132-139
- President Ronald Reagan: the legacy of the Reagan era*, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review September 2004

Websites:

- The Economist* – www.economist.com
- Washington Post* – www.washingtonpost.com
- New York Times* – www.nytimes.com
- www.realclearpolitics.com
- www.politics1.com

A2 Essay question:

- Assess the claim that there are too few checks on the president in the determination of foreign policy. [25] January 2010
- Discuss the view that the cabinet does not serve any significant presidential purpose. [25] June 2010
- To what extent has Obama been a successful president. [25] January 2011
- Discuss the view that the most important power of the president is that of persuasion. [25] June 2011
- Evaluate the usefulness of EXOP in helping recent presidents. [25] January 2012
- Assess the view that the Cabinet plays an important role in assisting the US president. [25] June 2012
- a) Describe the congressional checks on the presidency. [10]
- b) Discuss the view that the crises faced by the Bush and Obama administrations increased presidential power. [15] January 2013

- Discuss the view that the US president has more control over foreign policy than domestic policy. [25] *June 2013*
- To what extent is presidential failure inevitable.[25] *June 2014*
- Evaluate the role played by the Executive Office of the President. *June 2015*
- To what extent has President Obama been a “lame duck” president? *June 2016*

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Synoptic Unit F855: Executives PA

Duration: 2 weeks

Content:

Election, power and functions of chief executives;
issues concerning the organisation of executives– as presidential, or prime ministerial, and cabinet government;
issues concerning the efficiency of executives in carrying out the functions of executives;
formulation and implementation of domestic and foreign policy;
relationships with the legislative and judicial branches of government;
contemporary issues concerning the role and power of executives; authority and accountability.

Essential references

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013)

Is Cabinet government back? Politics Review Vol 21, April 2012

Whatever happened to cabinet government? Politics Review November 2009

Additional references

The Presidential Controversy in Britain, Michael Foley, Politics Review February 2009

Prime Ministerial and Presidential power compared, Anthony Bennett, Politics Review September 2007

The UK and US Cabinets, Anthony Bennett, Politics Review November 2004

Filling the Gap: Implementing Policy in the UK and US, Anthony Batchelor, Politics Review February 2004

A2 Essay question:

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| Discuss the view that cabinets no longer matter. [50] | <i>Sample paper</i> |
| Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a single executive over a plural executive constituted by a group of ministers. [50] | <i>January 2010</i> |
| Analyse the factors influencing chief executives when making appointments. [50] | <i>June 2010</i> |
| A strong executive is vital for effective formulation and delivery of policy. [50] | <i>January 2011</i> |
| Discuss the view that that prime ministerial and presidential forms of government are essentially similar. [50] | <i>June 2011</i> |
| Analyse the factors which make chief executives successful. [50] | <i>January 2012</i> |

- Discuss the view that the power of executives is determined by constitutional arrangements. [50] *June 2012*
- 'Scrutiny of the executive has become the most important function of legislatures.' Discuss. [50] *January 2013*
- The relationship with the legislature is the key factor influencing executives? [50] *June 2013*
- Compare & contrast the ways in which chief executives formulate & implement policy. *June 2014*
- To what extent is the power of chief executives determined by their style and skills? *June 2015*
- "Crises are the most important factor in determining the power of chief executives." Discuss. *June 2016*

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Unit F853: Congress

AJE

Duration: 5 weeks

Content:

Functions of legislatures; representation, participation and accountability.

Membership; leadership; committees;

the legislative process;

role of political parties;

oversight of the executive;

factors influencing voting in Congress

Class Activities

Teacher presentation as introduction

Class discussion on role of Congressmen & voting decisions

Teacher presentation on passing legislation

View confirmation hearing using online video

Teacher presentation on the role of parties in Congress

Class planning on voting influences

Assignments

Use of E-learning modules from Center on Congress

Note-making

Group research and presentations on current bills in Congress

Essay & Timed Essay

Research on Congressional committees and scrutiny case studies

Essential references

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013)

Congress: Why is it so unpopular? Anthony J Bennett, Politics Review, November 2014

Debate: Is Congress the broken branch? Rowena Hammal and Andy Baker, Politics Review April 2014,

Congress: An Obstacle to Effective Government? Edward Ashbee, Politics Review November 2012

Congress: watchdog or lapdog? Anthony J Bennett, Politics Review April 2010

Highlights: The Filibuster, Kay Moxon, Politics Review September 2010

US Healthcare reform, Kay Moxon, Politics Review November 2010
How Effective is Congress? Edward Ashbee, Politics Review November 2007
AJE notes on scrutiny in Congress

Additional references

Obama and Immigration: a story of broken promises? Jonathan Vickery, Politics Review, April 2012
Focus on... Term Limits in the USA, Katie Shapiro, Politics Review September 2010
Why are US congressional committees so important? Anthony Batchelor, Politics Review April 2009
Pressure Groups and the US Congress, John Dumbrell, Politics Review April 2008
Update: The Senate and nomination of judges, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review September 2005
The US Congress: Topicmaster Guide, Anthony J Bennett, Philip Allan Updates 2007 – copy in Politics Office

Websites:

US Senate - <http://www.senate.gov/>
Office of the Clerk to the House of Representatives - http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/election.html
Indiana University's Centre on Congress - <http://www.centeroncongress.org/>
Open Congress - <http://www.opencongress.org/>
The Economist – www.economist.com
Washington Post – www.washingtonpost.com
New York Times – www.nytimes.com
www.realclearpolitics.com
www.politics1.com

A2 Essay question:

What purpose do parties serve in the US Congress? [25]	<i>Sample Paper</i>
Examine whether congressional checks on the president are effective today. [25]	<i>January 2010</i>
Analyse the reasons why Congress rejects more legislation than it passes. [25]	<i>January 2010</i>
Assess the importance of committees in the work of Congress. [25]	<i>June 2010</i>
Evaluate the factors which influence how members of Congress vote. [25]	<i>January 2011</i>
To what extent can the Senate and House of Representatives be regarded as co-equal chambers? [25]	<i>June 2011</i>

- (a) Describe the role of committees in Congress. [10]
- (b) Examine the reasons why Congress rejects more legislation than it passes. [15] *January 2012*
- To what extent does Congress lack effective leadership? [25] *June 2012*
- Evaluate the claim that the Senate is more important than the House of Representatives. [25] *January 2013*
- 'The most important function of Congress is that of executive oversight' Discuss [25] *June 2013*
- a) Outline the stages that a bill must go through to become a law in the USA. [10]
- b) Explain why lawmaking is so difficult in the USA. [15] *June 2014*
- "Congress is a broken branch of government." Discuss. *June 2015*
- Assess the claim that parties are an increasingly important influence on voting within Congress. *June 2016*

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Synoptic Unit F855: Legislatures

AJE

Duration: 2 weeks

Content:

Functions; internal organisation; the role and power of second chambers;

Role of political parties within;

Role of legislators as delegates or representatives;

The relationships with the executive and judicial branches of government;

Contemporary issues concerning representation, accountability, sovereignty and effectiveness.

Class Activities

Plan essay on representation with class.

Group investigation of different aspects of legislatures

Essay planning

Assignments

Group investigations and presentations using articles to compare different aspects of legislatures

Essay

Essential references

AS Legislatures notes

Synoptic Legislatures online booklet

EU Parliament notes from AJE

Additional references

Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction, Rod Hague and Martin Harrop, Palgrave (8th Edition 2010) – Chapter 15 - copy in Politics Office

Elected Second Chambers and Their Powers: An International Survey, Meg Russell, *Political Quarterly*, Vol. 83, No. 1, January–March 2012

Comparative Responsiveness: UK and US legislators and legislature, Anthony Batchelor, *Politics Review* April 2008

US Congress and UK Parliament: are they in decline? Anthony Batchelor, *Politics Review* November 2006

The House of Commons and the House of Representatives: similarities and differences, Anthony Bennett, *Politics Review* November 2005

Parliamentary and Congressional Committees, Anthony Batchelor, Politics Review April 2005

The Lords and the Senate: similarities and differences, Paul Simpson, Politics Review February 2005

Where does power lie in the European Union? Richard Whitaker and Philip Lynch, Politics Review April 2009

A2 Essay question:

Discuss the extent to which different legislatures control the work of the executive. [50] *Sample paper*

Analyse the reasons for the differences in power exercised by second chambers. [50] *Sample paper*

To what extent do legislatures control the work of the executive? [50] *January 2010*

Discuss the differences in power exercised by second chambers. [50] *June 2010*

Contrast the effectiveness of legislatures in fulfilling their representative function. [50] *January 2011*

“Legislatures no longer fulfil their functions.” Discuss. [50] *June 2011*

To what extent do legislatures fulfil their representative function? [50] *January 2012*

Assess the effectiveness of legislatures in passing legislation. [50] *June 2012*

‘Scrutiny of the executive has become the most important function of legislatures’ Discuss. [50] *January 2013*

To what extent do legislatures represent the interests of political parties rather than the interests of the public? [50] *June 2013*

Assess the claim that law making is the most significant function of legislatures. *June 2014*

Compare and Contrast the ability of legislatures to check the executive. *June 2015*

“Political systems do not need a second legislative chamber. Discuss. *June 2016*

Past Paper Questions (old A2 syllabus):

Discuss the extent to which constitutions limit the powers of legislatures. [60] *January 2005*

Examine the claim that legislatures should be free from the influence of interest groups. [60] *January 2005*

Discuss the need for institutional reform within legislatures in different political systems. [60] *June 2005*

Discuss the view that the most important role of legislatures today is to check executives. [60] *June 2006*

Contrast the effectiveness of legislatures in representing their electors. [60] *June 2007*

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Unit F853: Political parties

PA

Duration: 5 weeks

Content:

Roles and functions: representation, participation.

Philosophy, ideology and policies of the two major parties:

Social democracy / Liberalism / New Deal Democrats,

Reagan and Republican Revolutions (1990s), New Right & Neo-conservatism:

the dominant ideology and end of history theses, Third way, New Democrats & Compassionate Conservatism.

The role and impact of third parties; party renewal and decline.

Assignments:

Note making

Research on ideologies of various Congressmen

a) Outline the functions of parties in the USA. [10]

b) Discuss the view that the ideologies of the Democratic and Republican parties have converged in recent times. [15]

Assess the importance of political parties in US politics. [30]

Essential references

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013)

US political parties: why are they so different? Politics Review Volume 23, September 2013

Polarisation and partisanship, Politics Review Volume 22, November 2012

The Democrats: what's next? Politics Review Volume 21, April 2012

The Tea Party: mid term bickering? Politics Review Volume 21, September 2011

US media, Politics Review Volume 21, Sept 2011

The Republicans where do they go from here? Politics Review Volume 20, September 2010

US Healthcare reform, Politics Review Volume 20, November 2010

US political parties: more differences within than between, Politics Review, Volume 19, September 2009

US Update, Blue Dog Democrats, Politics Review Volume 19, November 2009

Additional references

Update: the impact on the parties of the November 2006 midterm elections, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review April 2007

US Political Parties, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review November 2006

Moving Apart: the changing nature of the American parties, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review
April 2004

Websites:

The Economist – www.economist.com

Washington Post – www.washingtonpost.com

New York Times – www.nytimes.com

www.realclearpolitics.com

www.politics1.com

A2 Essay question:

- a) Outline the functions of parties in the USA. [10]
- b) Discuss the view that the ideologies of the Democratic and Republican parties have converged in recent times. [15] *June 2010*
- Evaluate the claim that political parties are in decline. [25] *January 2011*
- Assess the importance of political parties in US politics. [25] *January 2012*
- To what extent do third parties play a significant role in US politics? [25] *June 2012*
- Discuss the view that US political parties are now experiencing a revival. [25] *January 2013*
- Evaluate the success of political parties in the performance of their functions. [25] *June 2013*
- To what extent do parties offer the electorate a clear ideological choice.[25] *June 2014*
- a) Outline the meanings of dealignment and realignment. [10]
- b) Assess the significance of race, region and religion as influences on US voting behaviour. [15] *June 2015*
- Discuss the view that political parties still have an important role in US politics today. [25] *June 2015*
- Assess the factors that explain the performance of third party and independent candidates in recent elections. *June 2016*

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Unit F853: Elections, presidential and congressional AJE

Duration: 6 weeks (4 on Presidential elections, 2 weeks on Congressional elections)

Content:

Functions of elections: representation, participation, accountability, legitimacy, direct, indirect and representative democracy.

The nominating process including primaries, caucuses and national party conventions;

The general election campaign including the role of parties, and factors influencing the campaign and voting behaviour; the Electoral College.

Congressional: Factors influencing the campaign and voting behaviours; issues concerning incumbency, redistricting and gerrymandering.

Class Activities

Teacher Presentation on Presidential Elections (AJE notes to support)

Video of Obama election campaign to watch and discuss

Groupwork and structured discussion of strengths/weaknesses of the primary process

Video of conventions to go with teacher notes

Teacher presentation of US General Election campaign

Teacher Presentation on Congressional Elections

Discussion and use of teacher notes on Why Obama won in 2008

Assignments

Reading & Notemaking

Research and presentations on campaigns

Analysis of election results

Essay on primaries

Timed Q1a & b on electoral college

Essential references

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013), Chapter 2 pages 36-112

DVD : *By the People: The Election of Barack Obama*

The Mid-Term Elections: How significant are they? Edward Ashbee, Politics Review, April 2015

Debate: Is the process for nominating presidential candidates hopelessly flawed? Neil Whiskerd and Anthony J Bennett, Politics Review, April 2015

Focus on... Gerrymandering in the USA, Katie Shapiro, [Politics Review](#), February 2015

Debate: Should the Electoral College be replaced by a National Popular Vote? Justin Whitton and Alastair Endersby, [Politics Review](#) November 2013

Four more years: How did Obama do it? Clodagh Harrington, [Politics Review](#) February 2013

US Election 2012 Results, Kay Moxon, [Politics Review](#) February 2013

The first billion-dollar US election, Clodagh Harrington, [Politics Review](#) November 2009

Update: Why Hilary Clinton lost the primary race, Edward Ashbee, [Politics Review](#) September 2008

AJE notes on Primaries & Caucuses + Conventions + third parties + Why Obama won

Additional references

Larry J. Sabato (Editor), *Barack Obama and the New America: The 2012 Election and the Changing Face of Politics*

Janet M Box-Steffensmeier and Steven E Schier (Editors), *The American Elections of 2012*

The Gamble: Choice and Chance in the 2012 Presidential Election, John Sides and Lynn Vavreck; Princeton University Press (Sept 2013)

Larry J. Sabato (Editor), *Pendulum Swing* (on the 2010 mid-term elections)

Allen I Abramovitz, *The 2008 Elections*

Larry J. Sabato (Editor), *The Year of Obama: How Barack Obama Won the White House: A Citizen's Guide to the 2008 Elections*

Mark Halperin and John Heilemann, *Race of a Lifetime: How Obama won the White House*

Focus on Split Ticket voting, Katie Shapiro, [Politics Review](#) April 2014

Primaries and Caucuses evaluated, Edward Ashbee, [Politics Review](#) November 2008

Debate: Are US Presidential elections too long? Andrew Fearnley and Mark Rathbone, [Politics Review](#), November 2012

A2 Focus on Redistricting in the USA, Katie Shapiro, [Politics Review](#), November 2011

US Media, Kay Moxon, [Politics Review](#), November 2011

Debate: Should the Electoral College be abolished? Anthony Bennett and Colleen Harris, [Politics Review](#) April 2011

The US Mid-term elections: turn the scoundrels out, Russell Tillson, [Talking Politics](#) January 2007, p81-85

The Electoral College: Why so difficult to reform? Anthony Bennett, [Politics Review](#) September 2006

Update: 2008 Congressional Elections Results + In Focus guide, Edward Ashbee, [Politics Review](#) February 2009

US midterm elections 2006, Alex Wadden, [Politics Review](#) February 2007

Race and ethnicity in US Politics, William Storey, [Politics Review](#) September 2007

Update: The Invisible Primary + Blogging, Eddie Ashbee, [Politics Review](#) September 2006

Update: Absentee Voting, Edward Ashbee, [Politics Review](#) February 2005

US Presidential Election 2004, Edward Ashbee, [Politics Review](#) February 2005

The 2004 Presidential Primaries, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review November 2004

Money and the 2004 US Elections, Alan Grant, Politics Review November 2004

Direct Democracy in the USA: Referendums, initiatives and recalls, Paul Simpson, Politics Review April 2004

A Matter of Race, Daniel Graham, Talking Politics April 2003

Websites:

Crystal Ball - <http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball>

The Economist – www.economist.com

Washington Post – www.washingtonpost.com

New York Times – www.nytimes.com

www.realclearpolitics.com

www.politics1.com

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/politics.aspx>

<http://elections.gmu.edu/>

A2 Essay question:

(a) Outline how the Electoral College functions. [10]

(b) Analyse the factors which explain the continued survival of the Electoral College. [15] *Sample Paper*

Evaluate the importance of the role played by Ross Perot and Ralph Nader in the presidential elections of 1992 to 2004. [25] *Sample Paper*

(a) Outline how the Electoral College works. [10]

(b) Discuss the view that the Electoral College should be reformed. [15] *January 2010*

Evaluate the importance of third parties in American politics. [25] *January 2010*

To what extent did the nominations of McCain and Obama strengthen the case for reforming the method of choosing presidential candidates? [25] *June 2010*

Discuss the view that long-term factors are the key influence on voting behaviour in presidential elections. [25] *January 2011*

Evaluate the factors which influence the outcome of mid-term congressional elections. [25] *June 2011*

Discuss the view that third parties are doomed to fail. [25] *June 2011*

Evaluate the importance of the 'invisible primary' in the selection of presidential candidates. [25] *January 2012*

Discuss the view that the economy is the most important influence on voting behaviour in presidential elections. [25] *June 2012*

To what extent do third parties play a significant role in US politics? *June 2012*

Discuss the merits of presidential primaries and caucuses as a method of selecting presidential candidates. [25] *January 2013*

Discuss the reasons why the Electoral College has not been reformed. [25] *June 2013*

To what extent does the nomination system for presidential candidates need to be reformed? [25] *June 2014*

a) Outline the meanings of dealignment and realignment. [10]

b) Assess the significance of race, region and religion as influences on US voting behaviour. [15] *June 2015*

Evaluate the criticisms of the system for nominating presidential candidates. *June 2016*

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Synoptic Unit F855: Elections

AJE

Duration: 2 weeks

Content:

Electoral systems, candidate selection procedures;
conduct of general election campaigns;
issues concerning the media and campaign finance;
theories of voting behaviour; issues concerning representation, participation and democracy;
contemporary issues associated with elections and voting behaviour.

Class Activities

Use of elections data for comparisons
Discussion
Essay planning

Assignments

Revision of AS material
Essay

Essential references

AS Electoral systems and elections notes
Synoptic Elections online booklet
US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013)
The TV Debates: the game-changer of the campaign? Paul Fairclough and Eric Magee,
Politics Review April 2011

Additional references

Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction, Rod Hague and Martin Harrop,
Palgrave (8th Edition 2010) – Chapter 10 - copy in Politics Office
Comparative Electoral Turnout, Kay Moxon, Politics Review November 2013

A2 Essay question:

Compare and contrast the main influences on voting behaviour in modern elections. [50] *Sample paper*

Discuss the view that the state of the economy is the most important influence upon voting behaviour. [50]	<i>January 2010</i>
Contrast the roles of third and minor parties in different political systems. [50]	<i>January 2010</i>
Discuss the view that elections are never won by campaigns alone. [50]	<i>June 2010</i>
Examine the claim that the first past the post electoral system cannot be justified in a modern democracy. [50]	<i>June 2010</i>
To what extent does the media determine the outcome of elections? [50]	<i>January 2011</i>
Discuss the view that personality is now the key influence upon voting behaviour. [50]	<i>June 2011</i>
Assess the view that money plays too important a role in modern elections. [50]	<i>January 2012</i>
Discuss the view that proportional representation is the only democratic alternative to first past the post. [50]	<i>June 2012</i>
Discuss the view that no single theory provides an adequate explanation for voting behaviour. [50]	<i>January 2013</i>
Assess the claim that the nature of party systems in modern democracies is mostly determined by the electoral system used. [50]	<i>January 2013</i>
Discuss the view that every electoral system has significant disadvantages. [50]	<i>June 2013</i>
Discuss the view that no electoral system can carry out all its functions successfully.	<i>June 2014</i>
Discuss the significance of short-term factors upon voting behaviour in recent elections.	<i>June 2015</i>
Discuss the view that voters are increasingly volatile today.	<i>June 2016</i>
Discuss the factors that influence the type of party system to be found in a country.	<i>June 2016</i>

Past Paper Questions (old A2 syllabus):

Assess the factors which influence the level of public participation in modern politics. [60]	<i>January 2005</i>
Examine the view that elections are not won or lost during the campaign itself, but in the years before the campaign. [60]	<i>January 2005</i>
Discuss the view that no single theory of voting behaviour can account for how people vote in elections. [60]	<i>June 2005</i>
Analyse the claim that elections no longer fulfil their functions. [60]	<i>June 2006</i>
Analyse the view that money and media play too great a role in modern electoral politics. [60]	<i>June 2007</i>
Compare and contrast the most important influences on voting behaviour in different elections. [60]	<i>June 2008</i>

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Unit F853: Pressure groups PA

Duration: 5 weeks

Content:

Roles and functions; types; methods used;
examples of, and reasons for, success or failure;
implications for the democratic process; issues concerning power and influence.
Corporatism / elitism / pluralism / New Right views.

Assignments

- Assess the relative importance of factors likely to lead to success for pressure groups in Washington. [25] *January 2010*
- Evaluate the claim that pressure groups undermine democracy in the USA. [25] *June 2010*
- Evaluate the importance of the functions performed by pressure groups in American democracy. [25] *June 2011*
- Evaluate the claim that some American pressure groups have too much power and influence while others are too weak [25] *January 2012*
- Discuss the view that pressure groups need more than money to be successful [25] *June 2012 & January 2013*
- 1a Outline the different types of pressure group to be found in the US [10]
- 1b Evaluate the extent to which pressure groups have contributed to an elitist form of government in the US today. [15] *June 2013*

Essential references

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013)

US update: PACs and super PACs, Politics Review Vol 21, April 2012

Freedom Works, Politics Review Vol 21, April 2012

US pressure groups, a blight on democracy? Politics Review November 2009

Additional references

Pressure Groups and the US Congress, John Dumbrell, Politics Review April 2008

Websites:

The Economist – www.economist.com

Washington Post – www.washingtonpost.com

New York Times – www.nytimes.com

www.realclearpolitics.com

www.politics1.com

A2 Essay question:

- Examine the claim that pressure groups hinder rather than assist democracy in the US. [25] *Sample paper*
- Assess the relative importance of factors likely to lead to success for pressure groups in Washington. [25] *January 2010*
- Evaluate the claim that pressure groups undermine democracy in the USA. [25] *June 2010*
- a) Describe two types of pressure group and provide at least one US example of each [10]
b) Explain why pressure groups are considered by some to be a threat to democracy [15] *January 2011*
- To what extent is the effectiveness of a pressure group determined by its membership. [25] *June 2011*
- Evaluate the claim that some American pressure groups have too much power and influence while others do not have enough. [25] *January 2012*
- Discuss the view that pressure groups need more than money to be successful. [25] *June 2012 & January 2013*
- a) Outline the different types of pressure group to be found in the US [10]
b) Evaluate the extent to which pressure groups have contributed to an elitist form of government in the US today. [15] *June 2013*
- Assess the claim that pressure groups have made US government and politics pluralist. [25] *June 2014*
- “Money alone does not make pressure groups successful.” Discuss. *June 2015*
- Analyse the reasons why some pressure groups are more effective than others. *June 2016*

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Synoptic Unit F855: Political parties and pressure groups

PA

Duration: 3 weeks

Content:

Power within political parties;
two-party, multi-party and dominant-party systems;
issues concerning the role of ideology in political parties;
the debate concerning the decline of political parties and the rise of candidate and issue-centred politics;
current political issues in the UK and US;
the function and power of pressure groups in a modern representative democracy;
contemporary issues associated with parties and pressure groups

Essential references

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013)
Conservative and Lib Dems closer than we thought? Politics Review November 2011
US pressure groups, a blight on democracy? Politics Review November 2009
US political parties : more differences within than between, Politics Review September 2009
US Update, Blue Dog Democrats, Politics Review November 2009

Additional references

Comparative Government & Politics, Hague & Harrop Palgrave 2010
Party Transformation in the UK and the USA, William Storey, Politics Review April 2006
The New Right in the UK and USA, Philip Lynch, Politics Review February 2005
UK and US party systems, Anthony Batchelor, Politics Review September 2004

A2 Essay question:

Contrast the roles of third and minor parties in different political systems. [50]	<i>Sample paper</i>
Assess the contribution of interest groups to democratic government. [50]	<i>Sample paper</i>
Assess the claim that pressure groups undermine democratic government. [50]	<i>January 2010</i>
To what extent are parties less ideological today? [50]	<i>June 2010</i>
Examine the effectiveness of direct action and public protest as a means of pressure groups achieving success.	<i>January 2011</i>
'Pressure groups play a vital role in modern democracies' Discuss. [50]	<i>June 2011</i>

Discuss the view that political parties are in decline. [50]	<i>June 2011</i>
'Parties no longer provide ideological choice'. Discuss. [50]	<i>January 2012</i>
Discuss the view that political parties no longer matter. [50]	<i>June 2012</i>
Analyse the factors which explain the increased importance of pressure group. [50]	<i>June 2012</i>
Discuss the view that the attitude of the government is the most important factor influencing the effectiveness of a pressure group. [50]	<i>January 2013</i>
Assess the claim that ideological convergence between political parties has come to an end. [50]	<i>June 2013</i>
To what extent do parties sacrifice ideological principle in order to win elections? [50]	<i>June 2014</i>
Assess the claim that parties have converged ideologically. [50]	<i>June 2015</i>
Discuss the view that democracy is weakened by the activities of pressure groups. [50]	<i>June 2015</i>
Discuss the factors that influence the type of party system to be found in a country.	<i>June 2016</i>
To what extent are parties in decline while pressure groups flourish?	<i>June 2016</i>

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Unit F853: The Supreme Court

AJE

Duration: 5 weeks

Content:

Functions of judiciaries; the rule of law and judicial independence.

Membership; appointment process;

issues concerning judicial review, accountability and democratic control;

theories and practice of judicial activism and judicial restraint;

the role of the Court in the development of the rights of states and individuals, and of deciding other constitutional issues.

Class Activities

Teacher presentation to introduce topic, including online video

Watch and discuss online video of confirmations hearings

Class study of a recent case, including audio of oral hearing

Essay planning

Assignments

Reading and note-making

Online research on recent cases and appointments

Essay

Timed essay

Essential references

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013)

BBC bios of the 9 Justices - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-33103973>

The US Supreme Court: a political, not a judicial, institution? Robert Singh, Politics Review, February 2015

Debate: Does the US Supreme Court have too much power? Kaylan Billingsley and Anthony J Bennett, Politics Review April 2013

A2 Focus on Strict and Loose Constructionism, Justin Whitton, Politics Review February 2013

The Roberts Court: Judicial Activism or Judicial Restraint?, Robert Singh, Politics Review, February 2012

A2 Focus on Judicial Review, Nick Gallop, Politics Review, September 2011

Debate: Is the Supreme Court too powerful, Edward Ashbee and Anthony Bennett, Politics Review November 2010

Additional references

The Oath: The Obama White House and the Supreme Court, Jeffrey Toobin; Anchor Books (2013)

The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court, Jeffrey Toobin; Anchor Books (2008)

Conservative Justice: The Roberts Supreme Court, Robert Singh, Politics Review September 2008

The Roberts Court, Robert McKeever, Politics Review April 2007

The Roberts Court, Mike Simpson, Talking Politics April 2007, p132-135

The Supreme Court appointments process, Edward Ashbee, Politics Review September 2005

New Yorker articles on individual justices and recent confirmations

Websites:

www.supremecourtus.gov

<http://www.oyez.org/>

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/>

The Economist – www.economist.com

Washington Post – www.washingtonpost.com

New York Times – www.nytimes.com

www.realclearpolitics.com

www.politics1.com

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/us-supreme-court-on-trial-has-it-become-too-powerful-for-the-good-of-the-country-10334160.html>

A2 Essay question:

Discuss the claim that appointments to the Supreme Court are the most important appointments a president makes. [25] *Sample paper*

Discuss the view that the power of the Supreme Court cannot be justified in a democracy. [25] *January 2010*

Evaluate the factors which influence appointments to the Supreme Court. [25] *June 2010*

To what extent has the Supreme Court become more conservative in recent years? [25] *January 2011*

To what extent can the Senate and House of Representatives be regarded as co-equal chambers? [25] *June 2011*

Discuss the view that the Supreme Court is essentially a political institution. [25] *January 2012*

a) Outline the process for appointing justices to the Supreme Court. [10]

b) To what extent has the Roberts Court favoured judicial restraint over judicial activism? [15] *June 2012*

- Assess the method by which members of the Supreme Court are chosen. [25] *January 2013*
- Evaluate the impact of appointments to the Supreme Court. [25] *June 2013*
- Assess the claim that the Roberts Court has shown a clear ideological direction in its rulings. [25] *June 2014*
- To what extent is the Supreme Court a political institution? [25] *June 2015*
- a) Outline the role of the President and Congress in the appointment of Supreme Court Justices.
- b) Why has the appointment process been criticised? *June 2016*

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Unit F853: Civil rights and liberties

PA

Duration: 5 weeks

Content:

Concerning race, religion, gender, freedom of speech and expression;
the role of institutions and of the Constitution in defending rights;
current issues associated with rights and liberties.

Essential references

US Government and Politics, Anthony J Bennett; Philip Allan (4th Edition, 2013)

US Updates... extending gay rights, Politics Review Volume 23, November 2013

The death penalty in the US, Politics Review Volume 22, April 2013

Judge: Do they protect civil liberties, Politics Review Volume 22, April 2013

US Updates: The right to bear arms and same sex marriage, Politics Review Volume 19, November 2010

A2 Focus on judicial review, Politics Review Volume 21, September 2011

Debate: Does the US Constitution work? Politics Review Volume 21, February 2012

Additional references

The Civil Rights Movement in the USA, Nick Gallop, Politics Review April 2005

Websites:

The Economist – www.economist.com

Washington Post – www.washingtonpost.com

New York Times – www.nytimes.com

www.realclearpolitics.com

www.politics1.com

A2 Essay question:

Discuss the claim that rights and liberties in the United States are better protected in theory than in practice. [25]

Sample Paper

To what extent have developments since 9/11 proved that rights and liberties are not adequately protected in the US today? [25]

January 2010

Assess the role of the Supreme Court in the defence of rights and liberties. [25]

June 2010

Discuss the view that rights and liberties are not adequately protected in the US. [25]	<i>January 2011</i>
Assess the view that the Bill of Rights no longer adequately protects the rights of Americans. [25]	<i>June 2011</i>
Discuss the view that rights and liberties in the US are better protected in theory than in practice. [25]	<i>January 2012</i>
Assess the view that first amendment rights are well protected in the US today. [25]	<i>June 2012</i>
Evaluate the role of the Robert's court in the defence of rights and liberties. [25]	<i>June 2013</i>
Discuss the view that some rights are better protected than others in the USA. [25]	<i>June 2014</i>
To what extent does the protection of rights in the USA depend upon public opinion? [25]	<i>June 2015</i>
Discuss the view that the Roberts Court has been an effective defender of the Bill of Rights. [25]	<i>June 2016</i>

OCR A2 GCE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

A2 Synoptic Unit F855: Civil Rights and Liberties

Duration: 4 weeks

Content:

Issues concerning the adequacy of governmental arrangements for the effective protection of majority and minority rights, with particular reference to constitutions, bills of rights, legislatures and judiciaries;

issues concerning rights, liberty and citizenship;

contemporary issues concerning rights and liberties.

Articles

Judge: Do they protect civil liberties, Politics Review Vol 22, April 2013

Civil Liberties in the UK and USA, Paul Fairclough, Politics Review February 2007

A2 Essay question:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| Examine the view that rights and liberties are most effectively defended by judiciaries. [50] | <i>Sample paper</i> |
| Examine the view that rights and liberties are under threat today. [50] | <i>January 2010</i> |
| Evaluate the role of a bill of rights in the protection of rights and liberties. [50] | <i>June 2010</i> |
| Evaluate the claim that judiciaries alone are unable to provide an adequate protection of rights and liberties. [50] | <i>June 2011</i> |
| Assess the claim that institutions alone cannot provide adequate protection of rights and liberties. [50] | <i>June 2011</i> |
| 'The experience of the USA clearly illustrates why the UK is in need of a written constitution,' Discuss. [50] | <i>January 2012</i> |
| Discuss the view that rights today need better protection. [50] | <i>June 2012</i> |
| To what extent is there too great an emphasis on the protection of individual rights and liberties in modern democracies? [50] | <i>June 2013</i> |
| Discuss the claim that entrenched rights provide better protection than statute law. [50] | <i>June 2014</i> |
| "Rights and liberties are not adequately protected today." Discuss. [50] | <i>June 2015</i> |
| To what extent are rights effectively protected in political systems today? | <i>June 2016</i> |

A2 Assessment Matrix

Level	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
4	Thorough and accurate knowledge and clear and detailed understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Where appropriate candidates will provide convincing comparisons between them.	High level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of relevant political information (including, where appropriate, the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences with other political systems including the EU). Ability to recognise bias and faulty argument and to reason effectively towards an individual and informed conclusion.	Ability to distinguish relevant and important factors correctly and integrate these into a balanced, well-focused argument. Ability to communicate this clearly and present it legibly and logically in fluent coherent style containing few, if any, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
3	Good knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Where appropriate candidates will provide good comparisons between them.	Good level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the relevant political information (including, where appropriate, the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences with other political systems including the EU). Some attempt to recognise bias and faulty argument and to reason sensibly towards a sound conclusion.	Ability to identify the most important factors and present a relevant argument legibly and clearly if, at times, lacking incisiveness. There may be occasional errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
2	Limited knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Limited awareness of standard points of comparison.	Limited level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the relevant political information (including, where appropriate, the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences with other political systems including the EU). Limited attempt to explain a few of the more obvious points central to the question and to recognise and describe some differing viewpoints. Reasoning may be incomplete and, while opinions may be offered, they are unlikely to be supported by argument.	Limited attempt to distinguish relevant material, which is assembled into a limited argument with some sense of order and legibility. There may be some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
1	Basic and generalised knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Such knowledge and understanding will be incomplete and/or of tenuous relevance and may contain significant errors. Basic awareness of standard points of comparison.	Basic skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of some of the relevant political information (including, where appropriate, the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences with other political systems including the EU). Basic attempt to explain the simpler points central to the question and it is likely that only one viewpoint will be recognised. There will be little evidence of reasoning.	An attempt is made to shape an argument at a basic level, which lacks coherence, legibility and direction, and is unselective. Contains intrusive errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

A2 US Government and Politics Assessment Sheet

Date:

Name:

Title of Essay:

When you have finished your essay please fill in the first two parts of this assessment sheet. Your teacher will fill in the remaining sections.

1 *Independent Learning*

- How many articles did you read and which ones?

- Did you read any books? If so, which ones?

- Did you use any other resources, e.g. the internet? If so, which sites?

- How long did you spend **PREPARING** your essay? (**Be honest!**)

2 *Completing your Essay*

- How much time did you spend **WRITING** your essay? (**Again, be honest!**)

- Did you encounter any **SPECIFIC** problems? Give details.

3 **Teacher Assessment**

Your essay will be marked out of 25 marks and assessed according to the grid below.

Objectives	Comment	Mark
AO1 Knowledge and understanding. (Up to 10 marks.) i.e. Do you know the relevant institutions, theories and debates? Do you have up-to-date examples? Do you use the correct political terminology? Do you show that you understand that knowledge?		/10
AO2 Analysis and Evaluation. i.e. How well do you keep focussing on the demands of the question? Do you make links? Assess relative importance? How well do you compare, assess, identify etc.? Do you make a supported judgement in your conclusion?		/10
AO3 Ability to construct an argument and communicate it effectively making use of a range of political vocabulary. i.e. Do you have a central argument and express yourself in a clear English? Do you use paragraphs and spell accurately?		/5
		/ 25

4 **Teacher's overall comment including targets for improvement**

5 **Possible grade based on this mark**